have been taken to augment mining capacity in Coal Companies towards achieving self sufficiency:

1. Exploration capacity to prove more coal reserves is being expanded.
2. Faster allocation of more blocks for captive mining.
3. Speedy approval of projects.
4. Increased application of continous miner and longwall technology in underground mining.
5. Emergency coal production has been planned for increasing production from existing mines/projects.
6. Mechanization/modernization of existing mines.
7. Increasing productivity in underground and opencast mines.

Opening of new coal mines

1035. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to open new coal mines in various parts of the country to increase coal production;

(b) whether Government also propose to hand over certain new cola mines to the private sector;

(c) if so, the details thereof, location-wise and company-wise; and

(d) the total investment required for the purpose and the time by which new coal mines are likely to commence production?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. 97 new/expansion coal projects with a capacity of 241 million tonnes per year in Coal India Limited (CIL) and 41 projects with a capacity of 38 million tonnes per year in Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) have been identified to be taken up during the Tenth Five Year Plan period to increase coal production. In addition to this, Coal India Limited has also identified 16 existing projects for increasing coal production to the tune of 71.3 million tonnes per year under Emergency Coal Production Plan (ECPP).

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of reply to part (b) above.

(d) The total investment in new/expansion projects estimated is Rs. 18383.25 crore for CIL projects and Rs. 3126.30 crores for SCCL projects. The total likely investment for increase in capacity under ECPP of CIL is Rs. 3783 crores.

Normally a project starts giving production in 4-5 years time. During the terminal year of the Tenth Plan (2006-07) the production from 32 coal projects of CIL is expected to be 71.74 million tonnes and from 9 projects of SCCL is 5.285 Million tonnes. The other projects of Tenth Plan will come into production after 2006-07. The projects under ECPP will contribute 19 million tonnes of coal production in the year 2006-07.

Amendment of Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act

†1036. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act with a view to attract investment through private participation in the field of coal mining is under consideration;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the major requirement of power in the country is being met through the coal sector; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the further steps being taken to meet the requirement of Coal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) and (b) The Central Government had sought to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation Act, 1973 with a view to allow Indian companies both in the public and private sectors to mine coal in the country without the existing restriction of captive mining and to undertake exploration of coal in the country, in order to bridge the gap between demand and supply of coal. Accordingly, a Bill, namely, the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill, 2000, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in April, 2000.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.